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A HUMAN MONSTROSITY

ON May 1, 1912, at Fayette, Missouri, was born a female child (colored) having two heads and three arms. The monstrosity was still-born, but had apparently completed its intra-uterine development. It weighed about fourteen pounds.

The legs are two in number, properly placed, and perfectly normal. The trunk as seen from without is fully developed. Posteriorly it is entirely normal, but the breadth increases considerably toward the anterior end. The chest region is at least one half again as broad as it should be. Other than is suggested by the breadth of the chest, however, there are no signs of duplicity in the trunk. The breasts are two in number and far separated, being normally placed with reference to the sides. The spinal column is single and central as far as can be determined without dissection.

Three arms are present. Two show no signs of irregularity either in position or structure. The third is somewhat dwarfed, and is located on a level with the two normal arms and midway between them. It extends upward and backward, and is attached to an irregularly developed scapula resting between the normal ones. The structure of this third arm and its hand is quite abnormal. Both upper and lower arm bones are present, but reduced in size. The wrist bones are not regular or at least do not permit of normal movement. The bones of the hand are not all present, there being only the metacarpals and phalanges of the thumb and first two fingers. The distal segment in each case bears a thickened claw-like nail.

The most striking feature of this monstrosity is its two heads. Each is set at a slight angle with the general axis of the body, and rests close beside, but not crowding, the other. As far as can be observed, there is no abnormality of any sort in connection with these heads except for the position.

There are many problems of scientific interest suggested by this specimen and no doubt

many facts of interest and importance will be brought to light upon its dissection.

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THE OMAHA TRIBE

A REVIEW of "The Omaha Tribe," published in *SCIENCE*, June 13, 1913, calls for a few words from the authors, notwithstanding their disinclination to respond to a criticism which in some parts sounds more like vituperation. The opening sentences of the reviewer sound the keynote of his whole effort. He says:

The most obvious thing about this monograph is the authors' well-nigh complete neglect of the work of their predecessors. It is their avowed purpose (p. 30) to borrow nothing from other observers and to present "only original material gathered directly from the native people." Apart from any consideration of historical justice this principle is unjustifiable from the standpoint of the student.

Now, the paragraph in the preface in the work from which the above is quoted, reads as follows:

When these studies were begun nothing had been published on the Omaha tribe except short accounts by passing travelers or comments made by government officials. None of these writers had sought to penetrate below the external aspects of Indian life in search of the ideals or belief which animated the acts of the natives. In the account here offered nothing has been borrowed from other observers, only original material gathered directly from the native people has been used and the writer has striven to make, so far as possible, the Omaha his own interpreter.

By comparison of the two quotations it will be readily seen that the context has been willfully disjointed and that a segregated part of it was used as if it were the whole, an unjustified and unscholarly procedure.

The plan and purpose of the authors was to present the results of independent and original investigations on the Omaha, extending for over thirty years, and, as stated on p. 30, to avoid the criticism of other writers. The final adoption of this plan was due in a large degree to the regard which the authors felt for

the late Rev. J. O. Dorsey. They honored his personal character and his conscientious efforts, and preferred silence to the unwelcome task of pointing out the numerous errors throughout his work when he was no longer living to rectify them. Had Mr. Dorsey continued the study of the Omaha language and so perfected his knowledge of it he would have been better able to understand the meaning of the institutions and ideals of the tribe as they were explained to him in the native tongue. Regrettably his imperfect knowledge of the language, as can readily be seen in his Omaha texts, accounts for misconceptions that now appear in his writings.

It is with regret that the authors are now obliged to break the silence which they would have preferred to maintain. The misconceptions of Mr. Dorsey, cited by the reviewer, they corrected in the interest of truth, but without caring to detract from the credit due to the deserving author. Their competency to do so comes from the long and careful study of the tribal institutions and the beliefs on which they were founded, made in conjunction with practically all those men of the tribe who by position and ability were qualified to explain and to interpret tribal life and thought, and also to point out the differences between teachings that were to be taken literally and those which were symbolic in form and character.

The unusual advantages under which the monograph was prepared are indicated in the foreword (p. 30). One of the authors is not only himself an Omaha and well versed in his native language, but is equipped with a knowledge of English, so that niceties of the meaning and of the usage of words are made clear. In consequence of these facts and conditions it was in the power of the authors to state that among the Omaha tribe there was no belief that the ancestors of the people were animals and that at death men returned to the animals from which they sprang.

It would take too much space to reply to all the animadversions and innuendos of the would-be reviewer, nor would any good purpose thereby be served.

FRANCIS LA FLESCHÉ

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Éloges académiques et divers. Volume publié par le comité du jubilé scientifique de M. Gaston Darboux. By GASTON DARBOUX. Paris, A. Hermann & Fils. 1912. Pp. 525 + 4 + portrait. Price, 5 francs.

Jean Gaston Darboux, most eminent of living geometers, was born at Nîmes, France, April 13, 1842. His scientific career may be said to have begun with his entry into the École Normale Supérieure in 1861. To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of this event¹ it was proposed early in 1911, by a large international group of his mathematical co-workers, friends and former pupils (Professor Hale, of Mount Wilson Observatory, and Professor Hancock, of Cincinnati, were the American representatives), to present to Professor Darboux a gold medal bearing his portrait, and an appropriate address signed by the participants. All mathematicians were invited to share in rendering this honor to Professor Darboux. The response was so generous, the committee was enabled not only to have the eminent artist M. Vernon execute the medal but also to publish a memorial volume. This volume contains a full report of the commemoration proceedings which took place at the Sorbonne, January 21, 1912; Lippmann, Appell, Poincaré, Picard, Volterra, were among the speakers. It also contains 6 éloges historiques (pages 1-306) which Darboux as secrétaire perpétuel delivered before the Academy of Sciences of the Institut after his election in 1900. And finally, we find a dozen of his miscellaneous addresses (pages 307-440) among which mention may be made of that on "The Unity of Science," delivered at St. Louis in 1904, and that on "Fulton and the Academy of Science," delivered in 1909.

The volume is of particular interest to the scientist because of the most attractive style

¹ Curiously enough the letter sent out by the international committee stated that the jubilee of service as a teacher in the system of public instruction in France was to be celebrated. This error is perpetuated on page 443 of the memorial volume to be presently referred to. As a matter of fact, Darboux is even now a year or so short of such a period of service.